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North Carolina Central University is partnering with PNC Bank to host a series of events beginning in Black History Month that honor the contributions and accomplishments of historian and former professor of history at the university, Dr. John Hope Franklin. Franklin, who died in 2009, would have turned 100 on January 2, 2015. All the events are free and open to the public. "A Closer Look into the Life of Dr. John Hope Franklin" discussion led by students from NC-CU's Department of History, Feb. 18, 1 p.m., A.E. Student Union, Room 146. was former "Dr. John Hope Franklin: Friend and Colleague" discussion led by Dr. Walter Brown, former dean, NCCU School of Education. (NCCU Photo by Chi Brown)

NC schools assigned A through F grades on student results

By Emery P. Dalesio
RALEIGH (AP) - About one out of 20 North Carolina public schools are getting an A while about 6 percent brought home an F on new statewide school report cards released Feb. 5 using a generous grading curve.

All schools receiving a D or F must send letters to students' parents informing them of the grade.

School officials pointed to a correlation between school grades and the economic conditions of the children they teach. All the schools landing Fs and nearly all those drawing Ds had a majority of students receiving free or discounted lunch. Almost 90 percent of the schools collecting As had less than half of their students in poverty.

"Unfortunately what we see in these results is that performance tracks with poverty rates across North Carolina. This problem is not a new problem. It has become systemic and embedded in too many parts of our

sate and frankly our nation. So it's a problem that we need to address, and we need to solve," said state school board chairman Bill Cobey, a former state Republican Party chairman.

The school board will ask the General Assembly - which mandated the A-through-F school-house grades - to increase state funding for poor schools to (Continued On Page 2)



REP. LARRY HALL

Hall's speech responding to NC State of the State address

RALEIGH (AP) - The prepared text of the Democratic response to Gov. Pat McCrory's State of the State address on Feb. 4 by House Minority Leader Larry Hall, D-Durham:

Good evening North Carolina, I'm Larry Hall and I am honored to serve as Democratic Leader for the N.C. House of Representatives. I have always been proud to be a North Carolinian. We've always been a state where anyone willing to work hard could succeed.

My father was a career Army officer and our family lived at Fort Bragg before moving to Durham. I am proud to have attended and graduated from North Carolina public schools and to have earned a law degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

My teachers here in North Carolina gave me the foundation needed to succeed in a 16-year career as an Infantry Officer in the United States Marine Corps and as an attorney while my wife worked as public school teacher. When I left active duty in the Marines at Camp Lejeune in Jacksonville, I chose to remain here and make my home in North Carolina. I began practicing law, and eventually ran for public office.

I want to ensure my children and grandchildren, and your children and grandchildren, have the same opportunities I had and more - a shot at a good job, the chance to succeed, and the ability to provide an even better life for their families. As a Marine Corps Infantry Officer, I've served with America's best and brightest, most patriotic and dedicated. Our Motto is Semper Fidelis - Always Faithful. Although the recession of the past few years has been tough, I believed that, digging deep, we would bounce back. I never lost faith that we could come back. I was always faithful in North Carolina.

Today, middle-class families in other states are finally a little more optimistic about their future, more secure in their mortgages and more confident in their ability to provide for their families. But the fact is too many families here in North Carolina are still living paycheck to paycheck. Too many moms and dads are staying up at night worrying about creating a better future for their children. For them, the recovery just isn't complete yet. Now is the time to focus on building an economy that works for everyone, not just the very wealthy and a chosen few.

Here in North Carolina, quality public schools have always been the foundation of our economic prosperity. In 20 years, our children and grandchildren will be competing for jobs that don't even exist today. We need to make sure they get a quality education that prepares them to compete for the jobs of the future.

But the fact is Gov. McCrory is failing our students. Under his administration, North Carolina now ranks 48th in classroom spending. Our teachers are among the lowest paid in the nation and states like Texas are holding job fairs here and convincing some of our best and brightest to move away. We owe it to ourselves and our state to do better.

We have great teachers and we must give them the support they deserve.

If you really want to know how our schools are doing, just ask a teacher or parent. I've heard story after story of teachers buying supplies out of their own pockets or students working with outdated textbooks.

We need to stop cutting and start investing in our students. It's time to stop asking our students and teachers to do more with less - year after year. We need to make sure our children are given the tools to compete in the 21st century and that is something Gov. McCrory and the Republican legislature have simply failed to do. (Continued On Page 2)



THE JOHN HOPE FRANKLIN SCHOLARS FROM DURHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS. See story on page 2 and related story on page 2)

Latest Attack by Extremists Is More Smoke and Mirrors to Distort the Facts, and Deflect from the Extreme Policies They Cannot Defend

Statement from Rev. Dr. William J. Barber, II, President of the North Carolina NAACP

It is ridiculous, but typical, that the primary Republican response to Saturday's Moral March on Raleigh has been to once again deflect from the issues and to distort the Forward Together Moral Movement. Rather than debating us on their regressive public policies - policies that activated upwards of 80,000 North Carolinians to unite at the state capitol last weekend in continued mass protest - extremists in the legislature are instead trying to divert attention by misrepresenting a standard event flyer.

Throughout the North Carolina NAACP's long history of peaceful, nonviolent direct action, people who are opposed to our principles have often challenged our demonstrations with violence and other disruptions. To prepare participants, we have always recommended various security measures, including looking out for the elderly, remaining calm in the face of any altercation and bringing a photo ID for safety reasons. Photo ID is not required to participate in marches or other direct actions, and event officials have never checked for ID. To suggest otherwise is more of the same smoke and mirrors from lawmakers who pass vicious, unconstitutional policies that they simply cannot defend.

What is in fact hypocritical is for extremists in the General Assembly to lie about widespread voter fraud, which does not exist in the state of North Carolina, in order to pass a monster law that suppresses the right to vote at every level of the democratic process. This law not only implements a strict voter ID requirement; among other provisions, it also cuts a week from early voting, bans same-day registration and eliminates the pre-registration of 16- and 17-year-olds - all successful programs that had dramatically increased voter participation in the state. And as an August 2013 Public Policy Poll shows, the people of North Carolina decidedly oppose these attacks on democracy, with just 39 percent of voters supporting the voter suppression bill.

Furthermore, this legislature has also raised taxes on poor and working people, denied the expansion of Medicaid to half a million sick North Carolinians, made draconian funding cuts to public education and drastically restricted access to women's health - all after having sworn to legislate for the good of the whole. To claim to have moral convictions and then ram through policies that hurt the sick, the poor, and our children is among the pinnacle of hypocrisy.

As the enormous turnout and indestructible resolve at the Moral March on Raleigh showed this weekend, North Carolina will continue to fight back against this harmful, extreme agenda. We are here to stay; we will not give up; and no amount of distortions, distractions and deflections will stop us from moving our great state forward together.